

63-1945/8

7 March 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. U. Alexis Johnson
Deputy Under Secretary
for Political Affairs
The Department of State

With reference to your memorandum of March 6th, subject "U-2 overflights of Cuba - 29 August through 13 October," it is not practical to make any changes in my memorandum of February 27th, as it was distributed on that day to members of the United States Intelligence Board to supply background information for their guidance in testifying before committees of Congress. Since most of the recipients have concluded their testimony, no useful purpose will be served in making extensive modifications to the memorandum. In reading the transcripts of the intelligence officers who testified, none to my knowledge have spoken of the position of any individual or Department in connection with the planning or execution of flights during the period. However, as a discretionary measure, I will advise the recipients of the memorandum to avoid any such references in possible future testimony.

With respect to the final paragraph of your communication, I am surprised at the position taken with respect to my report to the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. The preparation of the report was considered by USIB with State's representative present. USIB agreed to the establishment of a Working Group under CIA's Inspector General, but with representation from State, DIA and NSA and this Working Group spent some 30 days in research and drafting. The Working Group operated under the direction of a committee composed of myself, General Carter for CIA, General Carroll for DIA, General Blake for NSA, and Mr. Hilsman for State, and this committee met a number of times to give the Working Group guidance and to monitor their progress and, finally, the committee met for a great many hours developing the final draft of the report and the conclusions.

Finally, the USIB in executive session on 3 January 1963, with State's representative present, concurred in my advising the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board that the draft report submitted to it on 26 December 1962 should be considered the final report. With this background, I continue under the impression that the report is the product of a joint effort and the final draft representative of the coordinated viewpoint of the intelligence community. I therefore feel that Mr. Bundy's understanding of the status of the report is correct.

signed

John A. McCone
Director

O/DCI/JAM/HK/mfb (7 Mar 63)

Orig - Addressee

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Intelligence Registry

63-1945

March 6, 1963

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE HONORABLE JOHN A. MCCONE,
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: U-2 Overflights of Cuba, 29 August
through 14 October, 1962.

We have reviewed your memorandum of February 27 prepared for background use on the foregoing subject and offer the following comments and suggestions.

As a general observation, I wonder whether it would not be practicable and desirable, in testifying on and discussing this subject, for everyone to adopt the same general principle that the President set forth with regard to the discussions in the NSC Executive Committee during the Cuba crisis, that is, there would not be any discussion of the various positions taken by the various individuals or institutions concerned. As in the case of the deliberations of the NSC Executive Committee, this need not and should not inhibit discussion of the issues and the various considerations involved in reaching decisions while avoiding the inevitable difficulties involved in trying to reconstruct in a public or semi-public way all of the views and positions of the individuals and institutions involved. If we are to maintain within the Government that degree of frankness and freedom to state views out of which sound decisions can be reached, particularly on sensitive intelligence matters, it seems to me that we should seek to preserve the anonymity of our advice and deliberations.

Thus, my own preference would be toward revision of the memorandum to delete all reference to personalities and institutions as well as debatable subjective judgments such as those in the last paragraph on page 2 and the second paragraph on page 3, and to confine the memorandum to a straight factual account of events. This could be done by deletion of the last paragraph at the bottom of page 1, all of page 2, the first two paragraphs at the top of page 3, the first line of the third paragraph on page 3, the paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 4 through the first full paragraph on page 5.

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-2-

all of page 6 beginning with the first full paragraph, and the first paragraph on page 7. This might require some slight rewriting to provide transition, but generally it seems to me the remaining material contains a full factual account. However, with respect to the last paragraph on page 10, we would suggest changes. I believe that the present language creates a misleading impression that there were more raw reports indicating offensive missiles than there actually were, that they "dovetailed" more than they actually did as to suspect area, that these reports were considered at high levels in the government (which to the best of my knowledge they were not), and that "MREM's were suspected" as though this was a generally accepted view between September 18 and October 15. I suggest the following reworded version as a substitute for this final paragraph on page 10:

"Additionally, from September 18th through October 2nd, certain agent and refugee reports created a suspicion among the analysts that there might be something of unusual importance going on in an area west of Havana and that this unusual activity might be concerned with MREM's. These reports, however, were not of sufficient credibility to warrant their being used in intelligence publications. Nevertheless, the track of the flight planned at the October 9th meeting to test the operational readiness of the known SAM sites was drawn to cover the suspect area."

If, however, it is the opinion of the President that the views of individuals should be included, the Secretary of State requests that the views attributed to him in the last paragraph on page 6 be corrected to read as follows:

"The Secretary of State expressed concern over the flight plan as proposed by CIA, involving as it did extensive peripheral coverage as well as two segments directly over Cuba. He said that such a long flight incurred exposure unnecessarily because the substantial peripheral portions could be flown as peripheral flights and that the portions involving direct overflight of Cuba could be handled with less exposure time if they would not combine with a peripheral mission. He recognized the necessity of obtaining vertical coverage of the Isle of Pines and the eastern portion of Cuba. He felt, however, that it was unwise to combine extensive overflying of international waters with actual overflights. He pointed

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-3-

out that the long peripheral flight would draw undue attention to the mission and further that, should the aircraft fall into enemy hands after an overflight had occurred, this would put the United States in a very poor position for standing on its rights to overtly international waters."

With respect to Mr. McGeorge Bundy's memorandum of February 25 addressed to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence, you will note that he refers to the top secret code word report prepared by you for the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board with respect to intelligence on Cuba before and during the October crisis as a "coordinated report". In this connection, it is my understanding that, while other agencies assisted in the drafting of the report, you did not seek nor obtain their concurrence in the final draft but rather considered it your personal report to the Intelligence Advisory Board. This was certainly entirely proper on your part and accordingly the Department of State did not insist that a number of suggestions and amendments, which it offered but were not accepted by you, be made prior to submission of the report. Thus, if you concur, I suggest that Mr. Bundy's understanding of the exact status of the report be clarified.

A. Alexis Johnson
A. Alexis Johnson

cc: Mr. McGeorge Bundy